

USC Thornton School of Music
Class name: Latin Percussion
Class code: MUJZ 218 A/B Units: 2
Section: 44461
Room: CTV G128

Time: Fridays 10-11:50 AM Course Instructor: Aaron Serfaty

Office: CTV G133
Office hours: By appointment only
Email: serfaty@usc.edu
Phone number: 818-209-3973

This class focuses on popular rhythms of Cuba and their percussion instruments. There is a strong emphasis on proper hand technique and proper feel of the styles studied. Styles: Son, Son Montuno, Guaracha, Mambo, Mozambique, Conga de Comparsa, Guaguanco, Bembe, Pilon.

Most of the styles are learned from the perspective of the congas with bongos, timbales, and güiro as accompaniment instruments.

We will also study samba and samba reggae from Brazil.

Grading is based on attendance (20%), performance and participation in class (20%), one concert report (20%), and one final exam (40%). **Final exam will be taken according to the final exam schedule issued by the university.**

Practice: There are three congas in CTV G128 at all times available for practice. Once the class roster is finalized other congas can be checked out through the music operations office.

Listening: There are many resources available. I suggest Spotify, Youtube and Pandora. This is a short list of names to look for: Ray Barretto, Giovanni Hidalgo, Miguel “Anga” Diaz, Jerry Gonzalez, Mongo Santamaria, Tito Puente, Changuito, Candido Camero.

Week 1

Listening to Cuban and Puerto Rican music.

Warm up routine. Basic conga sounds: open tone, Palm tone, muted tone, slap tone.

Proper hand technique. Beginning marcha. Watch videos of Pedrito Martinez, Giovanni

Hidalgo, and Ray Barretto.

Week 2

Review of basic tones and marcha. Expand to two slap sounds. Familiarizing with the basic styles of popular Cuban music that utilize the marcha pattern; son montuno, mambo, guaracha.

Week 3 and 4

Basic principles of clave and its origin. Introduction of two drum patterns. Expand to three slap patterns. Beginning bongo. Assignment: Find a song and talk about the direction of the clave.

Week 5

Pachanga, both modern and traditional with two drums. Introduction of the güiro. Transitions between mambo and pachanga.

Week 6

6/8 patterns for bembé. Understanding the 6/8 clave as the origin of the 4/4 clave.

Week 7 and 8

Rumba guaguancó, its political history and the three main styles.

Week 9

Conga de comparsa and the Latin music of the 50's including the Mozambique. Rickey Ricardo, Dámaso Perez Prado, Tito Puente.

Week 10

Chachacha and its origin in European music. Introduction to the timbales. The use of cowbells to build intensity in the music. Bolero on congas, timbales, and bongó.

Week 11

Introduction to the music of Brazil and its drums. Tamborim, pandeiro, surdos, caixa.

Week 12

Batucada with calls and responses.

Week 13

Samba Reggae.

Week 14

Transition between batucada and samba reggae.